THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The State Government has reported that 17 animals have died in Sariska Tiger Reserve from 1.2.2002 to date. Important reasons of death include infighting injuries, traumma, liver disease, poaching; and road accidents. The exact reason of death in case of two animals could not be ascertained because major portion of carcass was eaten by scavengers and the postmortem of the animals was not possible.

(c) The steps taken by the State to safeguard against such incidents include:

(I) Diversion of heavy vehicles outside the prime wildlife habitat.

(ii) Regulating the speed of vehicles inside Sariska Sanctuary.

(iii) Regular patrolling by field staff and equipping them appropriately.

(iv) Improvement of the wildlife habitat and augmenting the water supply through water holes and anicuts.

(v) Involvement of local communities and Non-Governmental Organization in wildlife conservation efforts.

(vi) Strengthening of communication network.

(d) Question does not arise.

Bio-Technology Policy of West Bengal

*287. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the West Bengal Government have launched a new bio-technology policy, to meet the future requirements;

(b) if so, whether the main trust of the policy would be on agriculture and food-based products, medicinal plants and environment;

(c) whether the Union Government have provided all assistance to the West Bengal Government, to implement the same;

(d) if so, whether such scheme has been launched in other States also; and

(ej if not, by when it would be launched in all the States?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the West Bengal Government has formulated and launched a biotechnology Policy with major emphasis on conservation of biodiversity, strengthening of agrarian economy, food based products, medicinal plants, environment, promotion of village level industries and generation of employment. The policy also addresses the use of bioinformatics, knowledge on IPR protection, biosafety and bioethics.

The major areas identified are development of transgenic cereal crops, jute and tea cultivation, medicine land aromatic plants, establishment of gene banks, biofertilizers, biopesticides, edible vaccines, enhancement of milk yield, vaccines for livestock diseases and system management with alternative resources and biomass development.

(c) The Department of Biotechnology continues to provide financial grant for R&D projects in the identified thrust areas to various research institutions, autonomous bodies and universities in West Bengal. Even in the policy formulation, the Department has been closely associated.

Formulation of a State-level Biotechnology Policy is a step towards the application of biotechnology for location specific problems in the States.

(d) and (e) Efforts for development, demonstration, training and application have been made by many other States in close "collaboration with the DBT. Some of the States are Orissa, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, etc.

Boosting up steel consumption

† *288. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY:
SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to formulate a new poljcy to boost the sagging steel consumption, or resort to legislation to promote steel

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.